

## Travel

## Boys' Night Out in Montreal

by Terje Anderson

Like any major city, Montreal boasts a well-developed gay bar scene. At least three dozen gay men's bars exist across the city, most of them concentrated in an area known as "Le Village."

The Village, a heavily gay area along Ste. Catherine Street Est (East in English) and between St. Denis and Papineau, is a relatively new phenomenon. Until the early eighties, most of the gay scene was concentrated in the traditional downtown, and there was no gay-identified residential neighborhood to speak of.

Virtually overnight that changed, and by the mid-1980's, the Village had grown from a handful of neighborhood bars into a full-fledged gay neighborhood, even electing openly gay members to the City Council and the Quebec National Assembly.

But while any tour of the Montreal bars

will, by nature, focus on this area, my favorite Montreal bar is actually one outside of the Village. La California (1412 Ste. Elisabeth, a small side street just off Ste. Catherine, three blocks west of St. Denis) is worth going slightly out of your way. A relaxed bar where people tend to hang out with friends (around the downstairs fireplace in the winter, or on the outside terrace during the summer), it is conducive to conversation and easy socializing. La California is a good place to go early in the evening, or on a weekend afternoon (Montrealers frequently meet each other there for a drink after work or before going out to dinner). But things continue well into the early morning hours here, and the upstairs pool-table area is very lively and cruisy. And, unlike most other men's bars, women are welcome. It's a good place to start a bar tour.

clude Sans Limite (1474 Ste. Catherine Est), Super Club David (1478 Ste. Catherine Est), and La Fiesta Tropicale (75 Ste. Catherine Est). Unlike in most American cities, in Montreal the dancers take off everything, so don't sit too close to the stage if you're easily embarrassed.

The big dance bars these days are Jungle (1400 Montcalm, corner of Ste. Catherine Est), Bronx (802 Ste. Catherine Est, site of the old Maximum Security), and Max (1166 Ste. Catherine Est). Each attracts its own audience. Jungle and Bronx tend to the younger and trendier set, while Max is a bit more mixed in age and attitude. Jungle is for both men and women, while Max retains an all-male policy. The recently opened Bronx has been picketed for its men-only door policy, and has designated certain nights as mixed. All feature good dance floors and sound systems, and all are great for cruising too.

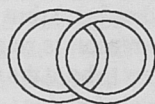
K.O.X. (1182 Montcalm, one block south of Ste. Catherine) intimidates some people a bit more than it should. While the clientele's tastes run to leather/denim and S&M, the crowd is definitely more diverse than that, and no one is sneered at for his choice of uniform. Anyone (male that is) can have a good time there. Usually packed, on a good night K.O.X. has an energy level no other spot in town can rival, with great dancing, billiards, and cruising. Give it a try - at least once.

Those who are more serious about their leather will want to try La Track (1584 Ste. Catherine Est), which has recently expanded to add additional dance space but kept the same self-consciously butch atmosphere. Taverne Rocky and Bar Rocky II (1661-63 Ste. Catherine Est), which offer a wider mix of ages than found in many of  
(continued on next page)

Lots of tourists are drawn to the strip bars, and recently many Montrealers have adopted them as a fun part of an evening out on the town. Campus (1111 Ste. Catherine Est) is arguably the best of these, with a continuous floor show, attractive dancers, porn videos, and a crowd which frequently rivals the dancers for looks. The atmosphere is fun, upbeat and "unsleazy."

Other bars offering similar fare in-

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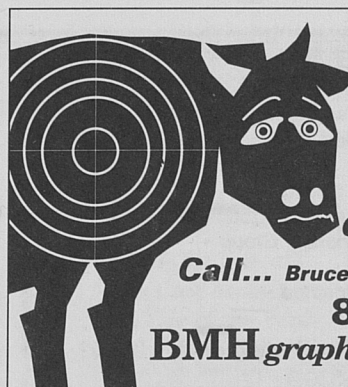
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